



What Happens Next?

Quality Assurance Process for the Measures of Student Learning: NC's Common Exams

During the 2012–13 school year, hundreds of thousands of students took the Common Exams for the first time. The design of the Common Exams began in 2011 with a gathering of 800 teachers who provided feedback on how to assess their content standards.

A set of those 800 teachers reviewed and approved the items that were generated as a result of their feedback. Thirty-nine school districts partnered with the Department of Public Instruction to administer the Common Exams during first semester. Their feedback informed decisions to the exams before second semester administration.

The Department of Public Instruction has committed to rigorous internal and external quality assurance checks prior to the use of any Common Exam data for value-added analysis. The results from a Common Exam that does not pass these checks will not be used to generate teacher value-added scores.

Internal Review by the Department of Public Instruction:

- ✓ Is the Common Exam reliable? Reliability describes the consistency or stability of student scores if a student were to take the exam multiple times.
- ✓ Is the Common Exam aligned with the content standards? The Department of Public Instruction has already completed this step. Multiple individuals have reviewed each Common Exam to ensure alignment with the content standards:
 - Department of Public Instruction Test Measurement Specialists
 - Department of Public Instruction Curriculum Specialists
 - NC State University Content Specialists
 - NC State University Specialists on Assessment for English Language Learners
 - NC State University Specialists on Assessment for Exceptional Children

- ✓ Does the Common Exam produce a desirable distribution of scores with a good spread across most of the scale? If the distribution is extremely negatively skewed or positively skewed, the test may not be useful for measuring growth of low ability or high ability students. Score distribution is a range, not clustered at one point on the scale.
- ✓ Does the Common Exam have any items that need to be removed, for example, an item that does not meet measurement of content criteria? If so, the Department removes the item from the test and any data analysis.

Only Common Exams that pass these quality assurance checks move on to the next stage of review.

External Review by the EVAAS Team at the SAS Institute:

- ✓ Did the Common Exam “pass” the quality assurance checks completed by the Department of Public Instruction?
- ✓ Can the Common Exam measure the achievement of both high- and low-achieving students? This idea is referred to as the “stretch” of an assessment.
- ✓ Did enough students take the Common Exam? Value-added analysis is not possible when a very small group of students have exam results.
- ✓ Did enough teachers teach the course associated with the Common Exam? Value-added analysis is not possible when a very small number of teachers have taught the course.
- ✓ Can students’ prior test scores be used to predict students’ scores on the Common Exam? For example, when the Department of Public Instruction and SAS Institute explored value-added modeling for Career and Technical Education Post-Assessments, the scores for some Post-Assessments could not be predicted. For others, a prediction model was possible.
- ✓ Are there sufficient differences among teacher value-added scores based on the Common Exam? In other words, do the results of the Common Exam provide measurable differences among teachers?

When a Common Exam passes both the internal and external review, results will be used to inform a teacher’s value-added score and sixth standard rating in the NC Educator Evaluation System.

For more information about the quality assurance checks for the Common Exams, please email educatoreffectiveness@dpi.nc.gov.